

Palmetto Baptist Church: September 6, 2020

The Motivation behind Unity in the Church: Ephesians 4:7-16 (Part 1)

Let me invite you to take your Bible and turn to Ephesians 4:7-16. We are working our way through the book of Ephesians together (line by line, word by word), unpacking the amazing truth of God's Word. To get us all on the same page, let me do a quick recap of chapter 4:

- **The exhortation for unity (vs. 1-3)** – Paul URGED the church to walk in unity
- **The illustration of unity (vs. 4-6)** – the Trinity (equal but different in economy)
- **The motivation behind unity. (vs. 7-14)** – the Person and Work of Jesus
- **The manifestation of unity (vs. 15-16)** – submission to one another and love for one another

Due to the brevity of time we have together each Sunday, we will focus on the first half of "the motivation behind unity" as seen in verses 7-11. We will call this part 1 of a two-part mini-series. 😊

Illustration on motivation:

The teenager lost a contact lens while playing basketball in his driveway. After a fruitless search, he told his mother the lens was nowhere to be found. Undaunted, she went outside and in a few minutes returned with the lens in her hand. "I really looked hard for that, Mom," said the youth. "How'd you manage to find it?"

"We weren't looking for the same thing," she replied. "You were looking for a small piece of plastic. I was looking for \$150."

FIRST PETS WIN OFFICE¹

Richard Phillips CHICAGO TRIBUNE (1986)

Ladies and gentlemen, the President of the United States.

And ahead of him, at least on informal occasions and usually on four feet, is what`s-his-name, the First Dog.

These days it`s Rex, a cutesy King Charles spaniel that was the President`s gift to [Nancy Reagan](#) for Christmas. Lovable--and, important, housebroken--the presidential pooch has "total access to the Oval Office,"

says Time magazine, quoting a [White House](#) spokesman. (Rex replaces Lucky, an affectionate but incontinent sheepdog whose 65 pounds constituted an unmanageable armful for Washington`s diminutive First Lady, whose office controls the fate of creatures

¹ <https://www.chicagotribune.com/news/ct-xpm-1986-04-06-8601250267-story.html>

that bark, yelp and howl but don't vote in Congress. Lucky is now at the Reagan California ranch.)

Pets have been domiciled at 1600 Pennsylvania Ave. as far back as there have been White Houses. Even before. Depending upon the species, they have gotten presidents into dog houses and out, chewed up the rose garden, drowned in the president's bathtub, given the First Families whipped cream and milk, nipped at servants and peed in the Oval Office.

The pets of our nation's presidents are so numerous they seem beyond counting. Some, like Woodrow Wilson's tobacco-chewing ram or Herbert Hoover's possessive police dog, rendered their masters seemingly more compassionate--a political nostrum of no small consequence in times when appearance is as valuable as substance.

Ronald Reagan thus has Rex, the only pet currently in residence at the White House. (The Reagans also have a variety of dogs and horses at their California ranch.)

Gerald Ford had Liberty, his famous golden retriever, whom Chevy Chase delighted in parodying on "Saturday Night Live." LBJ (Lyndon Blane Johnson: 36th president) had his yelping beagles, Him and Her. Richard Nixon, whose checkered career ended with a flight from the White House ahead of the hounds of Watergate, is remembered for Checkers, the cocker spaniel whose endearing demeanor somehow defused accusations of trickery.

Not all the White House pets are dogs, however.

According to a chronicler of presidential pets, Margaret Truman, author of a 1969 book titled "White House Pets" (and daughter of the country's 33d president), cows were commonplace on White House grounds as late as the presidency of William Howard Taft. They gave milk, she wrote, but they also were family pets.

Other animals also have managed long-term residency on the grounds of America's most popular zoo.

[John Quincy Adams](#) harbored a pet alligator that he kept in the East Room as a favor to its rightful owner, Gen. Lafayette. (Adams also supposedly had silkworms for his wife, who parlayed their gifts into dresses.) Ulysses Grant's son, Jesse, had two alligators. Calvin Coolidge, whose menagerie reputedly was equaled only by Theodore Roosevelt's, was given a pygmy hippopotamus, two lion cubs and a raccoon--the last a gift intended as a dinner that never came to pass. (The raccoon instead was christened Rebecca and became a permanent family pet. The hippo went to the Washington Zoo, repository of dozens of unwanted presidential gifts.) Thomas Jefferson had a mockingbird on his Monticello estate.

Anecdotes abound.

Zachary Taylor chose an animal that seemed to reflect his disdain for clothes. Taylor himself cared little for clothing. Early in his career, he decided that a man in the Army was either a fashion plate or a soldier, and he chose the latter.

Taylor's battle charger, Old Whitey, "mirrored him completely," Truman says. He was a grayish white, shaggy-maned, knock-kneed, uncurried steed. He was an excellent match for a soon-to-be President who had a disproportionately large head, a homely face and large nose, a bulk torso and legs so short that an orderly had to help him mount. Both, however, were battle-proven and tough. Old Whitey proved faithful right to the end. When Taylor died in office, apparently from cholera in 1850, it was his placid, lethargic-looking mount that carried his boots--reversed--in Taylor's last ride, to Congress Cemetery. Another horse tale involves Ulysses S. Grant, who loved horses but suffered misfortune with a series of dogs. Each died of unknown causes.

When Grant's son Jesse voiced fears that his treasured Newfoundland was fated to go the same way, the president summoned the White House steward.

"Father asked no questions, made no accusations," Jesse wrote, and Grant ended the matter with a simple political promise:

"Jesse has a new dog. You may have noticed that his former pets have been particularly unfortunate. When this dog dies, every employee in the White House will be at once discharged."

The Newfoundland, named Faithful, enjoyed superb health throughout Grant's tenure in the White House, according to Truman.

United States presidents **have** often kept **pets** while in office, or **pets have** been part of their families. **Donald Trump** is the first **president** since James K. Polk to not **have** a presidential **pet** while in office.

Trump, the first president in a century with no dog, explains why: 'I don't have any time.'²

By [Antonia Noori Farzan](#)

Feb. 12, 2019 at 5:53 a.m. EST

When Barbra Streisand sat down with a reporter in November to promote her new album, the singer couldn't help going off-topic and ruminating on a question that has plagued many Americans.

"How does the president not have a dog?" she asked the Los Angeles Times. "He's the first president in 120 years that doesn't have a dog in the White House."

At last, we have an answer straight from President Trump himself. On Monday night, during his rally in El Paso, he finally explained that he doesn't have a dog because the idea of getting one seems "phony" to him, and his base likes him just fine regardless. Plus, he said, he doesn't have time.

Motivation behind unity

- **The generosity of Christ (7)** – Thesis: Jesus is unbelievably generous to the church!
- **The supremacy of Christ (8-11)** – Commentary (vs. 8: Psalm 68; vs. 9-11: commentary on verse 8a and 8b.)
- **The simplicity of Christ (12-14)** – Application (Common ministry; Common message; Common measure [protection])

The generosity of Christ (7)

Illustration on Generosity

The story is told that one day a beggar by the roadside asked for alms from Alexander the Great as he passed by. The man was poor and wretched and had no claim upon the ruler, no right even to lift a solicitous hand. Yet the Emperor threw him several gold coins. A courtier was astonished at his generosity and commented, "Sir, copper coins would adequately meet a beggar's need. Why give him gold?" Alexander responded in royal fashion, "Copper coins would suit the beggar's need, but gold coins suit Alexander's giving."

JESUS IS UNBELIEVABLY GENEROUS TO THE CHURCH!

- **Jesus understands our deficiencies.**
 - **Ephesians 4:3**
 - ³ eager to maintain the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.
 - Two different ethnicities coming together to form one new body. The challenges of maintaining unity were massive.
- **Jesus cares about us individually.**
 - Every believer receives at least one gift.
 - **Romans 12:3**
 - ³ For by the grace given to me I say to everyone among you not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think, but to think with sober judgment, each according to the measure of faith that God has assigned.
 - **I Corinthians 12:7**
 - ⁷ To each is given the manifestation of the Spirit for the common good.
 - **Ephesians 4:7**
 - ⁷ But grace was given to each one of us according to the measure of Christ's gift.

- **I Peter 4:10**
- ¹⁰ As each has received a gift, use it to serve one another, as good stewards of God's varied grace:
 - The gift can be found in four primary passages
 - Roman 12
 - I Corinthians 12
 - Ephesians 4
 - I Peter 4
 - The gifts can be divided into three categories
 - Sign (prophecies, tongues, knowledge, miracles)
 - **I Corinthians 13:8-10**
 - ⁸ Love never ends. As for prophecies, they will pass away; as for tongues, they will cease; as for knowledge, it will pass away. ⁹ For we know in part and we prophesy in part, ¹⁰ but when the perfect comes, the partial will pass away.
 - Speaking (pastor-teacher; leader)
 - Serving (hospitality; deacon; helping)
 - **I Peter 4:10-11**
 - ¹⁰ As each has received a gift, use it to serve one another, as good stewards of God's varied grace: ¹¹ whoever speaks, as one who speaks oracles of God; whoever serves, as one who serves by the strength that God supplies—in order that in everything God may be glorified through Jesus Christ. To him belong glory and dominion forever and ever. Amen.
 - Every gift is important for the unity of the church.
 - Read I Corinthians 12:14-26

¹⁴ For the body does not consist of one member but of many. ¹⁵ If the foot should say, "Because I am not a hand, I do not belong to the body," that would not make it any less a part of the body. ¹⁶ And if the ear should say, "Because I am not an eye, I do not belong to the body," that would not make it any less a part of the body. ¹⁷ If the whole body were an eye, where would be the sense of hearing? If the whole body were an ear, where would be the sense of smell? ¹⁸ But as it is, God arranged the members in the body, each one of them, as he chose. ¹⁹ If all were a single member, where would the body be? ²⁰ As it is, there are many parts,^[a] yet one body.

²¹ The eye cannot say to the hand, "I have no need of you," nor again the head to the feet, "I have no need of you." ²² On the contrary, the parts of the body that seem to be weaker are indispensable, ²³ and on those parts of the body that we think less honorable we bestow the greater honor, and our unpresentable parts are treated with greater modesty, ²⁴ which our more presentable parts do not require. But God has so composed the body, giving greater honor to the part that lacked it, ²⁵ that there may be no division in the body, but that the members may have the same care

for one another. ²⁶If one member suffers, all suffer together; if one member is honored, all rejoice together.

- **Jesus distributes gifts to encourage our unity.**
 - **Ephesians 4:3**
 - ³ eager to maintain the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.
 - **SOME BELIEVERS RECEIVE MORE GIFTS THAN OTHERS.**
 - **Matthew 25:14-15 (MORE IN QUALITY)**
 - ¹⁴“For it will be like a man going on a journey, who called his servants and entrusted to them his property. ¹⁵To one he gave five talents, to another two, to another one, to each according to his ability. Then he went away.
 - **Ephesians 4:11**
 - ¹¹ And he gave the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, the shepherds and teachers...
- **ALL THE GIFTS WERE GIVEN TO PROMOTE UNITY IN THE CHURCH.**
 - **Romans 12:3-5**
 - ³ For by the grace given to me I say to everyone among you not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think, but to think with sober judgment, each according to the measure of faith that God has assigned. ⁴ For as in one body we have many members, and the members do not all have the same function, ⁵ so we, though many, are one body in Christ, and individually members one of another.
 - **I Corinthians 12:7**
 - ⁷ To each is given the manifestation of the Spirit for the common good.
 - **Ephesians 4:1-3**
 - I therefore, a prisoner for the Lord, urge you to walk in a manner worthy of the calling to which you have been called, ² with all humility and gentleness, with patience, bearing with one another in love, ³ eager to maintain the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.
 - **I Peter 4:10**
 - ¹⁰ As each has received a gift, use it to serve one another, as good stewards of God's varied grace:

APPLICATION:

- **Jesus understands your deficiencies.**
 - Receive Him as your Savior
 - Daily depend on Jesus for generous help during your time of need.
- **Jesus cares about you individually.**
 - Identify your spiritual gift.
 - Acknowledge the gifts you see in others.
- **Jesus distributes gifts to encourage unity.**
 - Look for ways to use your gift to promote unity in the church.

